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SUBJECT: EXPERT PANEL MEETING ON DEVELOPING A
STANDARDIZED METHODOLOGY FOR DETERMINING
HUMANITARIAN NEEDS, BRUSSELS, JULY 13-15, 2004

1. SUMMARY: THE G-8 ACTION PLAN FOR AFRICA FAMINE INITIATIVE INCLUDES SUPPORT FOR IMPROVED WORLDWIDE EMERGENCY ASSESSMENT AND RESPONSE SYSTEMS. THE MULTI-DONOR STANDARDIZED MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF RELIEF AND TRANSITIONS (SMART) INITIATIVE IS THE CENTRAL FOCUS OF G-8 MEMBER SUPPORT. AN EXPERT PANEL MET IN BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, JULY 13-15, 2004, AND AGREED ON THE TECHNICAL PARAMETERS FOR COMBINING THE ASSESSMENT OF NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE, CRUDE MORTALITY RATE (CMR) AND FOOD SECURITY IN AN INTEGRATED SURVEY PROTOCOL. A PROTOTYPE WINDOWS-BASED ANALYTICAL SOFTWARE WAS DEMONSTRATED AND RECEIVED UNANIMOUS ENDORSEMENT FOR CONTINUED WORK AS IT SIMPLIFIES DATA ENTRY AND ANALYSIS, WITH QUALITY ASSURANCE CHECKS BUILT INTO THE SOFTWARE PROGRAM. THE EXPERT PANEL RECOMMENDED PILOT COUNTRIES FOR TESTING THE METHODOLOGY UNDER VARIOUS FIELD CONDITIONS. THE PANEL ESTABLISHED THE INTER-AGENCY WORKPLAN WHICH IS TO HAVE A DRAFT MANUAL READY BY END AUGUST, FINALIZED IN SEPTEMBER AND PILOT-TESTED. A MEETING OF ALL DONORS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS WILL BE CONVENED BEFORE END 2004 TO ROLL-OUT THE SMART METHODOLOGY. THE STANDARDIZED SMART METHODOLOGY WILL HARMONIZE DATA COLLECTION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT ACROSS ALL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND

2. THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID) AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, BUREAU OF POPULATION, REFUGEES AND MIGRATION (STATE/PRM) PARTICIPATED AT THE EXPERT PANEL MEETING ON THE SMART METHODOLOGY, HOSTED BY THE CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON THE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF DISASTERS (CRED). PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED: (1) THE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE ADVISOR, BUREAU FOR POLICY AND PROGRAM COORDINATION (USAID/PPC), (2) THE POLICY ADVISOR FOR AGRICULTURE, BUREAU FOR POLICY AND PROGRAM COORDINATION (USAID/PPC), (3) THE SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR FOR AGRICULTURE, BUREAU FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, AGRICULTURE AND TRADE (USAID/EGAT), (4) THE PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISOR, OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE, BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (USAID/DCHA/OFDA), (5) THE PROGRAM MANAGER, FEWS NET, OFFICE OF FOOD FOR PEACE, BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (USAID/DCHA/FFP), (6) THE HEALTH OFFICER, BUREAU OF POPULATION, REFUGEES AND MIGRATION (STATE/PRM), AND (7) THE USAID ADVISOR FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, OFFICE OF THE USAID REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EUROPEAN UNION, U.S. MISSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SMART METHODOLOGY IS FUNDED BY THE CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CIDA) AS PART OF A JOINT DONOR EFFORT TO DETERMINE NEEDS AND REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF HUMANITARIAN AID BASED ON RELIABLE, STANDARDIZED AND COMPARABLE DATA.

4. THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WAS TO REVIEW METHODOLOGY OPTIONS AND THE ANALYTICAL SOFTWARE FOR INTEGRATING THE ASSESSMENT OF NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE, CRUDE MORTALITY RATE (CMR) AND FOOD SECURITY.

5. THE MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY 33 PARTICIPANTS REPRESENTING 17 INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING DONORS (USG, DFID, EC-ECHO), UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES (FAO, U.N. SYSTEM STANDING COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION (UNS/SCN), UNICEF, WFP), UNIVERSITIES (CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, TULANE UNIVERSITY, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF INDONESIA), REPRESENTATIVES OF TECHNICAL INSTITUTES/NGOS INCLUDING THE FAO INSTITUTE FOR

APPLIED INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (NORWAY), SAVE THE CHILDREN/UK, AND THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC).

MEETING SUMMARY

16. THE PURPOSE OF THE SMART METHODOLOGY IS TO DETERMINE NEEDS, MONITOR AND REPORT ON PROGRESS AND TRENDS USING STANDARDIZED DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND REPORTING. THE TARGET AUDIENCE FOR THE SMART METHODOLOGY IS ALL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING HOST GOVERNMENTS. THE SMART METHODOLOGY WILL BALANCE TECHNICAL SOUNDNESS AND AMOUNT OF DATA TO BE COLLECTED WITH PRACTICAL FIELD CONDITIONS.

17. NUTRITIONAL STATUS AND CRUDE MORTALITY RATE ARE QUANTITATIVE, OBJECTIVE MEASURES OF THE BASIC WELL-BEING OF A POPULATION GROUP AND THE SEVERITY OF A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS. THEY ALSO MONITOR THE EXTENT TO WHICH A COORDINATED RELIEF SYSTEM IS MEETING EMERGENCY NEEDS AND THUS THE OVERALL IMPACT OF THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE. THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY APPROACH (HEA) WILL HELP EXPLAIN THE NUTRITION SURVEY FINDINGS AND MORTALITY, HOW THE CRISIS HAS AFFECTED PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD ACCESS, THEIR ABILITY TO COPE WITH THE CRISIS AND COSTS OF COPING, AND WHAT TYPES OF EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE ARE REQUIRED.

18. THE SMART METHODOLOGY WILL HAVE THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS: (1) IT WILL BE UPGRADED REGULARLY BASED ON LATEST RESEARCH WITH SMART VERSION 1 DEVELOPED THIS YEAR AS THE MOST BASIC, ESSENTIAL METHODOLOGY; (2) IT WILL INTEGRATE THREE MEASUREMENT PARAMETERS - NUTRITIONAL STATUS, MORTALITY RATE AND FOOD SECURITY - INTO A SINGLE PROTOCOL WITH A SOFTWARE PROGRAM THAT FACILITATES ANALYSIS AND STANDARDIZED REPORTING ACROSS ALL ORGANIZATIONS; AND (3) THE MANUAL WILL BE LINKED ELECTRONICALLY TO RELATED REFERENCES FOR A LAYERING OF GUIDELINES TO MEET DIFFERENT NEEDS.

19. SMART VERSION 1 WILL BE BASED ON ANTHROPOMETRY (NUTRITIONAL STATUS ASSESSMENT) WITH THE MOST CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF MORTALITY AND FOOD SECURITY INTEGRATED. AS RECOMMENDED AT THE JULY 2002 SMART WORKSHOP (WASHINGTON DC) THE EXPERT PANEL AGREED TO BASE THE SMART METHODOLOGY ON CURRENT BEST-PRACTICE METHODOLOGIES UNTIL FURTHER RESEARCH DETERMINES CHANGE. THE CRITICAL SET OF QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION NEEDED INCLUDES WASTING RATES (MEASURED BY WEIGHT-FOR-HEIGHT), EDEMA, CRUDE MORTALITY RATE (CMR), POPULATION SIZE, AND DEMOGRAPHY.

110. FOR MORTALITY ASSESSMENT, THE RECOMMENDATION IS TO USE CURRENT HOUSEHOLD CENSUS METHOD THAT DETERMINES THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS ALIVE AT THE MOMENT, THE NUMBER OF DEATHS AND BIRTHS WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD DURING THE RECALL PERIOD. MIGRATION IS CRITICAL AND SHOULD BE INCLUDED WITH DEATHS AND BIRTHS. TO KEEP THE PROTOCOL SIMPLE, ONLY A MINIMUM SET OF ESSENTIAL DATA ON CAUSE OF DEATH WILL BE INCLUDED. SINCE CRED'S COMPLEX EMERGENCIES DATABASE(CE-DAT), SUPPORTED BY STATE/PRM, WILL SERVE AS DATA SOURCE FOR THE CENTER FOR HUMAN SECURITY IN MONITORING THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF WAR ON THE HEALTH OF CIVILIANS, CONFLICT-RELATED DEATHS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE MORTALITY PROTOCOL.

111. FOR FOOD SECURITY, THE HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY APPROACH (HEA) IS THE ONLY LIVELIHOOD METHODOLOGY THAT LENDS ITSELF TO INTEGRATION TO NUTRITION AND MORTALITY ASSESSMENT. THE HEA METHODOLOGY WILL BE SIMPLIFIED BY USING KEY INFORMANTS RATHER THAN PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION AND REDUCING THE AMOUNT OF DETAILED QUANTIFICATION. THE AIM IS TO HAVE MINIMUM BUT SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO SET NUTRITION FINDINGS IN A CONTEXT, TO ALLOW A PREDICTION ABOUT FUTURE CHANGES IN NUTRITION, FOOD NEEDS AND RELIEF ACTION.

112. PILOT COUNTRIES: PARTICIPANTS REVIEWED POTENTIAL COUNTRIES FOR PILOT TESTING THE SMART METHODOLOGY. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CRITERIA IS THE COMMITMENT OF THE HOST GOVERNMENT TO SUSTAIN THE EFFORT. ANGOLA WAS RECOMMENDED AT THE JULY 2002 WORKSHOP WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE ANGOLAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH AT THE WORKSHOP. AFGHANISTAN AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO WERE ALSO RECOMMENDED. OTHER POTENTIAL COUNTRIES ARE: BURUNDI, CHAD, IVORY COAST, LIBERIA, MALAWI, RWANDA, SIERRA LEONE, AND SUDAN. ETHIOPIA IS RECOMMENDED BY USAID/PPC BECAUSE OF THE G-8 FOCUS AND ONGOING EFFORT TO UNDERTAKE NUTRITION ASSESSMENTS.

113. NEXT STEPS: (1) DEVELOP DRAFT MANUAL BY END

AUGUST AND FINALIZE BY END SEPTEMBER, (2) SELECT PILOT COUNTRY AND FIELD TEST THE METHODOLOGY, AND (3) REFINE THE METHODOLOGY AND SOFTWARE PROGRAM AS NEEDED AND ROLL OUT SMART VERSION 1 BEFORE END 2004 AT A DONOR/STAKEHOLDERS MEETING TO BE CONVENED BY USAID, STATE/PRM, CIDA AND OTHER PARTNERS. STATE/PRM, USAID/PPC AND CRED WILL CONVENE A MEETING WITH PVOS/NGOS AND OTHER PARTNERS IN EARLY SEPTEMBER (WASHINGTON DC) TO UPDATE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND REVIEW THE DRAFT METHODOLOGY.

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